

On Personal Television

NOT UNTIL this week had we ever heard of the Community Center for Television Production, nor, we suspect, had many other people around here.

Located in downtown Binghamton, it is the brainchild of Ralph Hocking, an art professor at the State University at Binghamton.

Mr. Hocking got tired of conventional TV fare and decided, in effect, to produce his own, and one can't help but admire his enterprise.

The end result has been the Center, which as we understand it, is devoted to helping ordinary citizens do the same.

What it boils down to is amateur movies with electronic playback to what to date have been rather limited audiences.

Mr. Hocking believes that the television can be a powerful, useful means of self-expression as well as a source of information and entertainment. He also thinks it should be available to anyone who wants to master its use.

These are fairly sound propositions with which we would not attempt to argue.

Without being churlish about it, we hope, we do however have some reser-

vations about the way that the Center is financed.

It is backed by a \$50,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. The money is funneled to the Center through WSKG-TV, the educational television outlet for the Triple Cities area.

One source of our misgivings is that the Council on the Arts has extremely heavy demands on its appropriation. It could this year have dispensed several times the \$18 million or so put at its disposal.

Under ordinary circumstances, Council money is spent in such a fashion as to involve relatively large numbers of people. We could be wrong about it, of course, but we can't see the production of essentially personal television statements in quite that light.

Our other misgiving is that, unless things have changed a good deal, WSKG-TV is barely hanging on financially, and we hate to see \$50,000 pass through its hands without the station benefitting either through money or program.

At the very least, one would think, the Community Center for Television Production would veer occasionally from home movie output toward something that would appeal to a wider audience over Channel 46.